

Gilroy Unified School District
SUPERINTENDENT'S PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, March 8, 2021
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Welcome & Introduction

Dr. Flores began by thanking the parents and the presenters for attending this meeting.

Superintendent's Report:

Reopening Planning Committee Update, Criteria, Recommendations

- The committee has been meeting since May (2020).
- It is comprised of 30 staff members that represents all unions and members of the executive team.
- The committee has completed so much work.
- Back in January, the Committee recommended to the Board that the district establish two Reopening criteria; 1) County in the Red Tier and 2) Gilroy's 7-day average below 25 for five consecutive days. Last Wednesday (3/3/21), the County moved into the Red Tier, and this weekend the second criteria was met.
- At the next Board meeting, the Committee will be bringing forth recommendations to the Board about the reopening of schools.
- The Committee had a meeting last Thursday and will be meeting again this Thursday, to talk about what they will be recommending to the Board.

Parent Survey results

- In order to prepare for the reopening recommendation, staff sent out another parent survey. The deadline to complete the survey was Friday, March 5. The district received over 5,000 responses.
- At the elementary level, about 60% of parents indicated they want their child to return to in-person learning and 40% want their child to continue in distance learning.
- At the secondary level, 43% would like to remain in distance learning, and 57% the in-person, hybrid model.
- The district also surveyed the preschool parents. 26 would like to remain in distance learning and 34 prefer the in-person, hybrid model.
- The district considers this survey as preliminary results.
- On Friday, March 19, following the March 18 Board meeting, staff will be sending out another survey and this one will include the actual description of what is approved by the Board. Parents will be asked to make a commitment to in person or distance learning for the rest of the year.
- Staff will also be following up with phone calls to parents who do not respond, because it is so critical that sites know who is returning.

Vaccinations

- The district entered into an agreement with the County of Santa Clara to open a large-scale vaccination center at Gilroy High School.
- The vaccination center has been operating for a couple of weeks. It is very efficient. Most of the time, people are in and out of the center within 30 minutes.
- They are vaccinating 500-700 people a day, with a goal to vaccinate as many as 2,000 people a day. The only thing stopping them from doing that is the impact of lack of vaccinations.
- At this time, they are only vaccinating people over 65, health care workers, educators, and childcare personnel.
- The district has a written agreement with the County, which indicates that they will give vaccines to all GUSD employees, regardless of where they reside.
- Dr. Flores said she is very optimistic that most GUSD employees will register and get shots, as many already have.

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- The County wanted to house a center in Gilroy, because of Gilroy's high case counts and wanted to make sure that Gilroy residents could get the vaccination.

Ventilation Study

- Dr. Flores explained during the February meeting in what order the schools would have the HVAC work done which includes assessing each unit and making repairs.
 - The outside expert team began with the five schools that host the distance learning access centers. Students attend these centers daily, as they have no internet or very poor internet. They access distance learning from these centers.
 - The expert team is almost done with these five schools (Gilroy, Christopher, Glen View, Rucker and Mt. Madonna).
 - The two high schools (Christopher and Gilroy), have taken a lot of time due to their size.
 - The team will be moving on to the elementary schools next and then the middle schools and GECA.
 - There are 1,200 HVACs in the district. This is a very big job that they need to complete.
- Q:** What if once they look at an HVAC unit and it cannot be brought up to the standard that the County is demanding?
- A:** In those instances, the district ordered HEPA filters, which will filter and circulate the air. Dr. Flores said she is feeling optimistic about the ventilation study/repair and having it completed for a possible reopening in April.

COVID19 Safety Plan

- The district has to complete what is called a COVID19 Safety Plan (CSP).
- The CSP addresses all of the areas that the district is addressing to make our schools safe before the schools can reopen.
- Staff has been working diligently on the plan.
- There is another plan that is also required by OSHA called the CPP, which is already posted.
- The plan requires consultation with the union and parent groups like SPAC
- The district has an excellent relationship with the three unions, especially the three union presidents.
- Overall staff has done a lot of work and the district is in a position to reopen once a decision is made about the reopening plan.
- The CSP will be included on the next Board agenda that will be posted on March 12 by 5:00 p.m.

Additional Q & A

- Q:** Is there any way to get the survey results out to the parents? The survey was a little confusing with synchronous and asynchronous. The parents will change their minds based on what others are doing.
- A:** The results will be included in the next Friday letter and shared at board meetings.
- Q:** There has been a lot of chatter online about the HVAC study, which is confusing to some. The district is calling it the HVAC study. Parents are thinking that no work is being done. They are thinking it is only an assessment. Some clarification would be helpful.
- A:** Dr. Flores said what is happening is that a team of experts is assessing one HVAC at a time and repairing it as they go which why it is taking so long. She will put this in the Friday letter. The district has a team of about five people that are on the roof checking all the functions and certifying the HVACs as they go.
- Q:** Is there a number of how many staff members are receiving the vaccination?
- A:** Every Monday, the H.R. dept. asks staff to complete a one-question survey, indicating if they have had at least one of the vaccinations.

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- Q:** If Parent Square is the only vehicle of distributing the survey, can the district also give it out through other means? Maybe send a link to the parents so they do not have to have a Parent Square account set up. For parents that are not versed or tech savvy, it may be easier to do that, or if staff is doing phone calls maybe they can ask parents.
- A:** Dr. Flores said they have several ideas about how to distribute the survey that will go out after the Board Meeting. Staff will use several methods to ensure that the district receives a response from all parents including sending out hard copies to some families.
- Q:** With Parent Square, many parents were confused about how to respond for multiple children?
- A:** One parent said there is a drop down menu but it was difficult to answer for more than one child.
- Q:** The importance of safety was stressed and how difficult it is to make a decision, when they have a child with special needs/IEP in place. It was a hard decision with no knowledge for the parents of the students who receive services. It would be very helpful if parents had some sort of guidance on what it is going to look like for the students receiving RSP services.
- A:** Dr. Flores thanked the parent and said that is good feedback she will share with special ed.
- Q:** Is the district mandating the vaccines for staff? What is the actual procedure or protocol for teachers who chose not to get vaccinated or cannot be vaccinated? Are they allowed to go back to school?
- A:** The district is not mandating vaccines. Most districts are not connecting reopening to all staff being vaccinated. It is not being recommended by the County Public Health Dept., CDC, or the Ca. PHD. These agencies are saying clearly to districts that they can reopen even if not everyone is vaccinated. Dr. Flores feels confident that they are going to have a high level of staff being vaccinated. The district cannot prevent staff from coming back to work, if they have not gotten the vaccine.
- Q:** When the district sends the survey out, is it going to be something spelled out by elementary and middle school and high school, because it is different at each level, correct? Will there be instances where students end up with other teachers? Will everything be clear so the parents know what they are committing to?
- A:** The plans for each level will be presented to the Board on March 18 at 7:00 p.m. The percentage of students staying at home in distance learning and students coming to school in person, will impact the options. The principals have been working with Dr. Deb Padilla and Kathleen Biermann, Directors of Curriculum on the details. They have also talked to other districts and are proposing similar models. They want to give parents a choice and we are hopeful the conditions continue to improve by reopening day. However, it is not going to look like school used to look, and everyone will need to adjust to that.

Tonight's Topic – Kathleen Biermann, Director of Elementary Curriculum and Dr. Deb Padilla, Director of Secondary Curriculum

- Ms. Biermann and Dr. Padilla have met with teachers on the Reopening Committee countless hours creating the reopening schedules.
- They are trying to keep up as best as they can with constantly changing conditions from the State Public Health Dept. as well as from Dr. Fauci, the CDC and others. It is a challenge but the goal is to do what is best for students through the models developed and recommended.

Hybrid Models at the Elementary and Secondary Levels

- What they are presenting this evening may change in a week based on what is happening at the State level and with the virus itself.
- The components of the schedule will be dependent on the numbers of students who return.
- In the survey, there was a general overview of the elementary reopening plan. Students that attend school in person in the hybrid model, will be at school for approximately a three hour

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- session, up to four days a week. The preferred model right now is an am/pm schedule that are determined by family groups. This is dependent on the number of days the students are returning. The elementary committee is still discussing the plan.
- One challenge is the numbers. For example, if there is a class of 28 and they only have 12 students returning and the rest in distance learning that is very difficult.
 - Though the numbers from the recent survey is preliminary; they have quite a bit of data. At this point, they are doing trending on that analysis.
 - The students in distance learning may need adjustments to their schedules and some students may need to be reassigned to another teacher. This is why staff are being fully transparent about this.
 - The current Wednesday schedule will remain the same – all students will participate in distance learning until 10:00 am, and they will do assignments in asynchronous individual learning time.
 - Students with IEP's in self-contained classes may have slightly different schedules.
 - Secondary has a few more things that they have to work out.
 - At the secondary level, they have what is considered single subject teachers, which means that they are credentialed to teach single teaching areas.
 - For those teachers, the district and site administrators have to look at what teachers are teaching. They will be keeping teachers with students in current schedule whether they are in distance learning or whether they chose a hybrid.
 - The selected plan will depend on the numbers of students who return and the number that stay at home in distance learning- the average class size in high school and middle school is 36.
 - Almost 60% of students do wish to come to their school for in-person learning and about 40% want to remain in distance learning.
 - At the secondary level, staff are looking at bringing students in about 4 days a week for approximately 60 minutes or one class per day.
- Q:** Are you expecting teachers who are doing in person to teach distance learning as well? In some districts, they are hearing that they are trying to have the teachers teach simultaneously.
- A:** GUSD is not currently looking at simultaneous teaching in the classroom.
- Q:** Are the students who are left in distance learning going to be doing more work independently?
- A:** For one class a day, they would have independent learning. The rest of the day would be just as it is right now, with a different class every day.
- Q:** At the end if you add that time, is it more independent work?
- A:** Work is more independent.
- Q:** If they make a commitment and the hybrid model, is not working out can they go back to distance learning?
- A:** The only way people understand is if they do some examples of what it might look like for individual students. For instance, for VLA, students cannot be moving back and forth because it changes the numbers in the classrooms. The district can be flexible to a certain point; they also need to make sure the district is following laws and guidelines. Other districts that have opened and students want to change to in-person are on a waiting list, because there it is a process. This is why the district is why asking parents if they are comfortable sending students back.
- Q:** The secondary is very confusing. Looking at her son's schedule - he has 8-9 classes with a zero period. It is her understanding that they will be taking just one class each day, so it is going to take him a whole week to complete all classes?

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- A:** Students. It will take about a week and a half for student to get through all of their classes. They will have one period a day at school then they will go home and do two periods at home. Students can choose to go into class and stay at the access centers.
- For middle school, with six periods a day, for example students will have one period in person on Tuesday then they will go home for the remaining classes. They will have periods three and five at home.
 - The following day, they will come in for second period, and they will go home and do distance learning in periods four and six.
 - Wednesday, they will begin in period three and go home and do periods one and five. They still have all of their classes; the difference is those that are choosing to stay home, will do the first period asynchronously.
- Q:** Thinking about transportation, bussing and getting the students to school for 60 minutes.
- A:** The district provides very little transportation, most of the students we transport are students with IEPs, and over the years there has been less and less transportation.
- That is also true at the secondary level. The district may be adding some students to the distance learning access centers. The district is already transporting the distance learning access students.
- Q:** Just to be clear with VLA, will this continue for the rest of the year? These parents are choosing options, will they have the option for in person or to stay at home in distance learning? Will that one survey be distributed to all GUSD children including VLA?
- A:** Commitment to VLA is for the year. This was explained from the beginning. When the parents signed up it was for the year. There was one VLA parent that got a survey and indicated they wanted to come back at the elementary level. Staff will have to figure out that situation-the student is not attached to a class. The district asked the VLA parents to commit to the entire school year (2020-21) and then for the next year they can let us know what they would like to do. VLA should not have received this survey. Staff will email VLA parents and let them know that this is not for the students in VLA.
- Dr. Flores said that the district has to complete a COVID Safety Plan. This plan will be presented to the Board next Thursday night. In addition, it will be posted before any students return to campus. One is the school guidance checklist and the other one is the CPP, COVID Prevention Program. (The checklist was shared).
 - The number of instructional minutes will vary per grade level. For secondary, the times on the schedule are going to be close but not going to be exact. The minutes listed for TK-5th are the required minutes.
 - Ms. Biermann, acknowledged the district nurses as they have spent so much time putting together, processes and procedures to keep students safe.
 - Parents will be asked to complete a daily health screening and agree to follow health and safety protocols.
 - Staff training and family education will be provided. All district staff will be trained, as well. The school nurses will be doing some of the training regarding safety protocols.
 - The end of the document shows whom they have consulted with, including SPAC and DELAC, as well as union groups.
- Q:** As far as reporting, if there is a case. Is that State mandated?
- A:** Yes, cases are to be reported within 4 hours. They have to report a suspected case using an online form. There are pages and pages in the guidelines just about the reporting and identifying of cases. If a student is suspected of having COVID19, the district has a very detailed procedure to follow, which includes contacting the PHD, contacting parents. Staff are

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- supposed to do some initial contact tracing. There are procedures about how long a student needs to be quarantined and testing.
- Q:** How does this affect cohorts: If exposure is within 6 ft. for 15 minutes is that avoided? Will the entire class have to quarantine?
- A:** These will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The district has offered athletic training for months, and there have only been a couple of suspected cases. The nurses have this procedure down. In addition, the district is bringing in nurse interns.
- Q:** What does that look like from an education standpoint for students that just go back from in person back to distance learning?
- A:** If the student is well enough to study then they go to distance learning while they quarantine. If a cohort is shut down, they go back to distance learning. There will be training for staff and training parents.
- Q:** Who will be doing the policing for the health survey?
- A:** That is a self-certification for the parents. The parent is going to self-certify, that the child is well. Staff cannot physically do this due to numbers. It takes 30 minutes to check in 70 students in the Distance Learning Access Centers.
- Q:** What happens if the color of the Tier changes again. Do they remain because it has to be approved beforehand.
- A:** Yes, schools can stay open. That is in the more recent guidelines that the PHD and the State have issued. Once a school is open, it can stay open. If the school has more than 5% on campus that are COVID19 positive, (students and staff), the school must close.
- Q:** As you are planning for all of this? What is happening for the next school year? Are you waiting for guidance and learning from this or parallel planning, hoping it will be better.
- A:** We are planning for the district to open next fall. The hope is that most Americans will be vaccinated by July. Hopefully, the case counts will continue to drop and the County will be out of the Tiers. That is all impacted by the numbers of people getting vaccinated. Our plan is to reopen unless we cannot because of the COVID numbers. It is all about safety. We want to do, first and foremost, what is best for students and staff.
- Q:** Topic about days kids are going to be in school- elementary for 2.5 hours and high school for one class, one hours a day. Is any of that based on something? Is there anywhere we can look into this so we can imagine as parents? Some of it just seems like a waste of time. Cannot imagine coordinating, pick up and drop off for 2.5 hours and one hour for high school.
- A:** The number one factor driving how many students can be on campus is physical distancing. Schools cannot have all the students on campus. They can only be on campus for a limited amount of time because of physical distancing. It really comes down to the math. The second thing is if only 60% of parents are sending back their children, and 40% are not, then the numbers dictate the schedule.
- Q:** The plan that Kathleen presented is that going to be presented to the Board at next Thursday's meeting?
- A:** We have one more plan that is being put together by the Reopening Planning Committee.
- Q:** If they end up with the am and pm sessions, will parents chose am or pm or will it be assigned?
- A:** It will be assigned.
- Q:** Will all elementary be starting and ending at the same time?
- A:** That is a very good question; staff is talking about that.
- Q:** Are you thinking of planning and opening in stages, like K-2 and then add 3-5?
- A:** The committee has talked about this, but now that we are getting later in the school year, if they phased it in that would mean less instructional time for that school group.
- Q:** Do they still have to bargain with unions?

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- A:** The district is already working closely with the unions. Many of the bargaining union members are members of the Reopening Planning Committee.
- Q:** For the survey, will there be an option that is open, or says for *example* “put my child where you need to”.
- A:** That is an idea - a third option where parents say their child can be enrolled in either.
- Dr. Flores stated that she hopes that this evening’s presentation has shown how challenging the plan is. The Committee has been working on it for months, and they have a ways to go. Dr. Flores said she appreciates input and questions from the SPAC members. She wanted to talk to them so that she could get their input.
- Q:** What would the schedule look like for the students in Dual Immersion (DI)?
- A:** The DI teachers have been planning and have been looking at options. There may be some changes in distance learning. Right now, the numbers show that more students want to return to the in-person DI program, than to be in distance learning. In the end, because the DI teachers work very closely together, they will put a plan in place.
- Q:** Will there be a PowerSchool?
- A:** Unfortunately, there will be a very limited PowerSchool. The reason it is limited is due to lack of classroom spaces. Depending on the site, there may have one additional classroom. The district is working with the schools. Some schools may have two or three classrooms that could open up fewer schools. The schools would start with students in the distance learning access centers and would offer it to them first, based on campus availability. The students who have limited access to technology, would be a top priority. Staff have to look at all student’s needs.
- Q:** At Las Animas, usually before school there are very few yard duties. Will there be staff to help keep that social distancing?
- A:** Yes, they are working on determining which staff could help staff all entry points to make sure parents do not get out of the car and are looking at existing staffing and who can help with these procedures.
- Q:** When you explain stuff to us, it helps a lot. The average parent, if they are not privy to knowing how much work is going on and they make assumptions, just because they do not know how much work is going on. Looking forward to hearing how GECA is going to function?
- A:** The district knows parents at large need more information and is going to launch a new webpage hopefully within the week. Staff are thinking about doing two town hall meetings. The district would start it with a big town hall meeting and then do breakout sessions with the school principals.
- Q:** In Aeries, it is a little bit more of a burden of process after the window closes. Maybe there is a way to streamline that process and reopen Aeries and tell parents if the kids are sick they need to be picked up as soon as possible.
- A:** Dr. Flores said this is a good point.
- GECA, because of the college schedule and Gavilan will remain online for the remainder of the semester; Gavilan has already announced that they will not be coming back for this year.
- Q:** If everything is approved what is the target date?
- A:** They cannot announce that yet. However, when the agenda is posted this week, there will be a date on the Board Agenda.
- Q:** Guessing State testing will change, especially since having some students in and, being a little bit hopeful. Do you guys see the light at the end of the tunnel?
- A:** Last month SPAC asked what is being done to get the State to not administer the State tests this year. In the past month, a lot has happened. Many groups wrote letters to the State Board of Education. It persuaded them to consider other options besides State testing, that they have been doing. Currently what they are considering they want to know if the State test is waived

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again for this year, what should districts use to measure student's performance. They are in the middle of this process and hopeful that the State Board is listening to all this input. The State Board has heard from hundreds of people regarding State testing. They are definitely listening and districts may not have to do them. Districts will, of course, have to use other measures that they have already administered.

- On the topic of high school graduations, principals and D.O. staff they have been talking a lot about it. They want to hold graduations but they must be done safely and allowed by the PHD. Currently, there is a limited number of people that can be outdoors in a gathering space, which is currently 200. There will likely be a virtual graduation ceremony that follows typical graduation ceremonies that will happen for all four of the high schools, and then they will have some sort of outdoor celebration or ceremony. Staff is planning for multiple scenarios and will be ready. However, parents have to understand that they may not be able to tell them exactly what is going to happen, until right before. They do not know what Tier it is going to be in place at that time.

Q: For the middle school celebration, will this be online again?

A: What they did last year is what they are currently planning for.

Q: If a parent decides they want their students in distance learning, will their still be a graduation?

A: Yes, the graduation ceremonies will be for all seniors. For 8th grade, they have talked about having a drive through type of celebration, with pictures in front of the new backdrops.

- For the high schools, they are really hoping that they will be in the Yellow Tier, and be able to have more people. They will not, look anything like past graduations with thousands of people. The schools cannot do that.

Q: What about teachers returning do they have an option? If it is approved and if all teachers have to return will, they need to return.

A: Some teachers may be in distance learning. They will need to return. If there are issues related to returning, these will be dealt with on an individual basis. T

here are teachers that want to be in the in-person hybrid model. They will do their best to meet what teachers want, however, they will have to work on that when they get to that point.

SPAC Representative Reports, will be presented during the April 12, meeting.

Topics for future meetings: Technology, Maribel Guizar, Director of Technology